



Mrs Heather Wheeler MP
Parliamentary Secretary
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Sanjay Pradhan
Chief Executive Officer
Open Government Partnership

Our reference: MC2022/12667

By email: paul.braithwaite@opengovpartnership.org

1st September 2022

Dear Mr Pradhan,

Thank you for your letter of 2 August, regarding the United Kingdom's participation in the Open Government Participation (OGP).

The UK published its fifth National Action Plan (NAP5) in January 2022 with commitments in six areas: (i) Open Contracting; (ii) Open Justice; (iii) Algorithmic Transparency and Accountability; (iv) Health; (v) Anti-Corruption and International Illicit Finance, and; (vi) Local Transparency.

Following feedback from civil society organisations about the lack of substantive involvement in some of the commitments, an issue which was also highlighted in your recent report, I co-chaired a Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) on the UK's Fifth National Action Plan for Open Government with Kevin Keith, chair of the UK Open Government Network. This brought together civil society organisations and government officials leading on key policy areas as part of the ongoing co-creation process. The 22nd June 2022 MSF roundtable enabled us to:

- identify what went well during the development of NAP5 and what needs to be improved;
- ensure that the process is as open, participatory and inclusive as possible both now and in the future;
- understand and respond to civil society reflections on the content of the NAP5 version published in January 2022, identifying existing commitments that could benefit from further engagement and potential new commitments to explore during the amendment period;
- establish consensus on commitment areas to prioritise through the establishment of discrete Working Groups; and
- ensure that amendments are made to the plan by the August 2022 deadline set by the OGP.

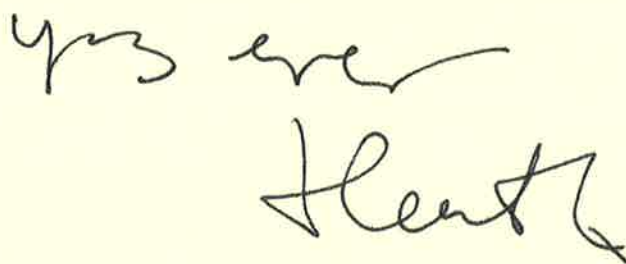
This was an important forum for discussion and my officials will continue holding further MSFs with the Open Government Network throughout the implementation of the UK's 2021-23 action plan.

We have convened discrete Working Groups on each of the agreed commitment areas and I am pleased to inform you that we now have an amended set of National Action Plan commitments in the areas of (i) aid transparency, (ii) diversity and inclusion, and (iii) Freedom of Information which have been co-created and agreed with civil society organisations. These have been shared with Kevin Keith and Paul Braithwaite, Senior OGP European Regional Coordinator and will be published on GOV.UK before the August 2022 OGP deadline.

The UK co-founded the Open Government Partnership. In that time we have seen significantly increased levels of citizen participation in decision making at national and local levels. The Chair of the UK Open Government Network has commented favourably on the engagement and levels of commitment that this NAP process has produced. Through Open Government ways of working, we promote innovative approaches to policy-making, mainstreaming and championing cultural change across central departments, local authorities, and agencies.

I would like to reaffirm our OGP commitment and trust that when the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee reviews the UK's participation status in October 2022, the actions taken to add additional commitments and to increase civil society participation in the implementation of the UK's 2021-23 action plan will be taken into consideration.

Thank you again for your letter. I welcome your continued engagement on this important matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'yours ever Heather', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Heather Wheeler MP